

IN THE MATTER OF A FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY COMMISSION

BETWEEN:

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

and

NORWICH CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

WRITTEN REASONS AND DECISION OF
THE INDEPENDENT REGULATORY COMMISSION FOLLOWING THE
HEARING
ON 25 NOVEMBER 2016

Background

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which sat by WebEx on 25 November 2016.
2. The Regulatory Commission members were Mr G Farrelly, Chairman, Mr M Robinson and Mr M Kearns.
3. Mr P McCormack of the FA Judicial Services Department acted as Secretary to the Regulatory Commission.
4. By letter dated 19 November 2016, The Football Association (“The FA”) charged Norwich City Football Club with misconduct for a breach of The FA Rules pursuant to Rule E20 (a) in respect of the Football League Championship fixture between Queens Park Rangers and Norwich City FC.
5. For completeness, the Rule E20 states that –
Each Affiliated Association, Competition and Club shall be responsible for ensuring:

(a) that its directors, players, officials, employees, servants, representatives, spectators, and all persons purporting to be its supporters or followers, conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and refrain from any one or combination of the following: improper, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or provocative words or behaviour, (including, without limitation, where any such conduct, words or behaviour includes a reference, whether express or implied, to any one or more of ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability) whilst attending at or taking part in a Match in which it is involved, whether on its own ground or elsewhere; and

(b) that no spectators or unauthorised persons are permitted to encroach onto the pitch area, save for reasons of crowd safety, or to throw missiles, bottles or other potentially harmful or dangerous objects at or on to the pitch.
6. It was alleged that in or around the 2nd minute of the fixture, Norwich City FC failed to ensure that its players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion.

7. The FA designated this as a Non Standard Case as Norwich City was charged with a breach of FA Rule E20(a) in the preceding 12 months following a Premier League fixture with Sunderland AFC on 16 April 2016.
8. The Charge was admitted on 23 November 2016.
9. Norwich City FC did not request a personal hearing and the case was dealt with on the papers only.
10. The Regulatory Commission viewed the video evidence in detail and gave consideration to the duration of the incident and the number of Norwich City FC players involved. They found no justification for the players' reaction and behaviour.
11. The Regulatory Commission considered previous sanctions imposed on Norwich City FC with regard to breaches of Rule E20 which are detailed as follows:
 - (1) In October 2013, the Club was fined £20,000 for an incident that occurred in a fixture v Cardiff City;
 - (2) In January 2014, the Club was fined £30,000 for an incident that occurred in a fixture v Newcastle United FC;
 - (3) In February 2015, the Club was fined £5,000 for an incident that occurred in a fixture v Watford FC; and
 - (4) As noted above, in April 2016, the Club was fined £30,000 for an incident in the fixture v AFC Sunderland.
12. The Regulatory Commission noted that this is the fifth incident of this nature in a three year period.
13. The Regulatory Commission took into account the fact that the Charge was admitted.

Conclusion

14. The Regulatory Commission came to the unanimous decision, having carefully considered the relevant factors, and have imposed the following financial sanction on Norwich City Football Club:
 - (i) The Club is fined the sum of £15,000; and
 - (ii) The Club is warned as to its future conduct.
15. This decision is subject to the relevant Appeal Regulations.

Mr Gareth Farrelly, Chairman

Mr Marvin Robinson

Mr Mick Kearns

29 November 2016